

Lecture Notes on Psychiatry. JAMES WILLIS, M.B., M.R.C.P.E., D.P.M.
Oxford. Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1964. Pp. ix+89.
Price 7s. 6d.

This book is written to give medical students an initial grasp of the scope and methods of psychiatry, and to define the terms in common use. Although in a book of this size some omissions are inevitable, the text is comprehensive and, more remarkable, comprehensible. In describing theories of psychological illness and methods of treatment Dr Willis is invariably lucid and fairminded. The section on history taking is particularly good.

The book is not intended for general practitioners, the bulk of whose work in this field is concerned with the neuroses, but for any who wish for a concise survey of the present state of psychiatry in England it will prove excellent and to the point.

Strong Medicine. BLAKE K. DONALDSON, M.D. London. Cassell & Co. Ltd. 1963. Pp. 245. Price 18s.

All doctors in general practice must by now have been confronted with the obese patient in late middle age who cannot lose weight on a checked low calorie diet. Indeed, this may prove fairly common if we stop discounting our patients' protests that they have followed our reducing diets faithfully. Dr Donaldson may have found a solution for these failures in a return to a diet of primitive animal flesh and fat. This is known to stimulate the pituitary gland which, in turn, damps down insulin blood levels. The author bases his hypothesis on modern sources in America and Great Britain which express the importance of a complete enzyme breakdown of muscle glycogen to carbonic acid and water. Each stage liberates motive energy and heat, but if one enzyme is missing, for instance, pyruvic acid will accumulate in the blood; this has a damping effect on fat katabolism and increases the fat deposit.

The author is concerned to show in half a dozen brilliant and witty clinical pictures, that this form of enzyme-deficient obesity is the apex of a sexology of diseases: heart disease, hypertension, osteoarthritis, diabetes, gall stones and allergy.

The telling of his tale is absorbing because it is vividly biographical; it is instructive because it is shrewdly clinical in the choice of case histories to illustrate each disease. The dietary advice is accurate and meticulous in culinary detail. One quotation from the book will explain what it is all about.

"Food was the primary concern of man as he evolved, and it had to be right. He lived on the fattest meat he could kill and on water. In those million years every weakling who could not maintain perfect health on that food was bred out. If he could not leap six feet straight up in the air to catch the branch of a tree, some sabre-toothed tiger was likely to solve all his problems. The ability to live well on meat and water is the inheritance of mankind."